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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Lithuania)

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SUBJECT Description of the Telephone and Telegraph Office
Office at Kaunas. 25X1

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The central offices of the telephone and telegraph administration in Kaunas were (and probably still are) located in a modern, three-story brick building located between Laisves Aleja - the Avenue of Freedom (now Stalin Avenue) and Ozeskienes Street (probably now renamed.) It fronted on Ozeskienes Street and was constructed in 1934-1935. In 1944 the Germans attempted to destroy the building by setting charges in the basement but only partially succeeded. I have drawn a sketch See Enclosure (A) of the location of the building from memory to show its location and nearby buildings.
2. The first two floors of the front of the building (facing Ozeskienes Street) housed administrative offices; the third floor front was given over to telegraph offices and equipment. The telephone equipment was in the back section or central part of the building which faced on the Post Office yard. There are windows on both sides of this central part. I have drawn separate sketches See Enclosures (B)-(E) from memory of the layout of the basement (Sketch 2), first (Sketch 3), second (Sketch 4) and third (Sketch 5) floors.

As can be seen from Sketch 2 there was a basement under the main part of the central building only. The workshop, storage batteries, power units and cable vault were all located in the basement. The first floor (Sketch 3) accommodated toll lines, frames, test desk, long distance repeaters (including an intermediate Riga-Berlin repeater), subscribers meters, the main distribution frame, offices, workshops and storerooms as shown. During the first Soviet occupation there was a door between the frame room of the first floor and the first

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floor of the adjoining Ministry of Justice building used by NKVD agents for connection changes of the controlled lines between the main distribution frame and the listening board. In the same room of Ministry of Justice building there was a 100 or 200 line secret panel dial system central office made by Ericson of Sweden. It was used for connections between high Government officials, the Ministry of Communication and Post Administration officials. It had no connection with the Kaunas central offices, but was maintained by a technician from the telephone administration. There was also listening equipment for wire tapping where conversations of certain subscribers of the regular service were monitored on a 24-hour basis.

3. The automatic equipment on the second floor was manufactured and installed by the Automatic Electric and Telephone Company, Ltd, of Liverpool, England. The cut-over took place in November of 1936. The dialing equipment is the "step-by-step" system with selectors similar to those used in the US. Subscribers were assigned numbers from 20 thousand to 29999. There is also a one thousand line telephone central of a similar type located on the second floor of the Post Office at Sanciai, a suburb of Kaunas, on Juozapavicius Prospect. Its numbers were from 41 thousand to 41999. It was installed at the same time as the main office and was connected by 40 or 50 trunks. A subscriber at Kaunas could dial Sanciai by the first two digits (41) and Sanciai could dial Kaunas by first dialing the first digit (2). Subscribers of the downtown Kaunas area and the larger streets were reached by underground cable; others by aerial cable or combinations of the two. Subscribers on the periphery were reached by aerial cables and open wire lines strung on poles. Kaunas and Sanciai were connected by underground and aerial cables.
4. The long-distance central office located on the third floor had a switch-board of 24 positions and about 100 long distance lines. There was at least one line between Kaunas and each town which was an administrative center of the 20 districts plus other larger towns. Some had two and three lines. There were also telephone lines to all neighboring Post Offices around Kaunas. All long distance lines outside the city (Kaunas) and larger towns were open wire lines. [redacted] amplifiers were used on long distance lines which often caused poor transmission. For international connections there were long-distance direct lines to Berlin, Koenigsberg, Edithkuhn, Riga, Liepaja and, I believe, Jelgava and Daugavpils, Latvia. After the Germans occupied Klaipeda (Memel) there were direct connections between Klaipeda and Kaunas. I am not sure of direct connections with the USSR [redacted] however the towns located on the Lithuanian borders had connections with towns in the other foreign border towns. There was a transit open wire line made up of four mm diameter copper wire (one pair) with an intermediate repeater on the first floor of the central in Kaunas for direct communication between Riga and Berlin, Koenigsberg and Riga and, possibly, Berlin and Moscow. A high frequency repeater (carrier) made possible the use of one circuit of exceptionally fine built (and maintained) pair of the same sized copper wire for three conversations simultaneously. There may be amplifiers on that line at other points but I am not sure. To the best of my knowledge the leased line went through Koenigsberg, Kybartai, Kaunas, Siauliai, Joniskis and Jelgava. There were also two more high frequency repeaters in the Kaunas central exchange for connections with Kaunas, Klaipeda and Siauliai which made, I believe, two circuits out of one wire pair.
5. In all of Lithuania the only other dial central of the same type as Kaunas was at Klaipeda with a three thousand line capacity. Large post offices such as Siauliai, Panevezhis, Marijampole, Silute and Ukmerge had central battery manual switchboards. Smaller post offices had only local battery manual central offices.

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6. The Republic of Lithuania was divided into approximately 20 telephone districts. Each was headed by a district mechanic with an assistant. They hired line teams who were untrained but received "on the job" training. These were seasonal and not permanent employees. They maintained telephone and telegraph lines and constructed new lines. They installed equipment in post offices and maintained the networks of towns. Each post office had a technician who took care of telephone and telegraph equipment and lines. The long distance lines are subjected to much damage due to storms, winter and summer. When breakdowns occurred, repair teams and technicians would be sent from one or both post offices between which the breakdown occurred. Trains, buses, horses and some automobiles were used by these repair teams.
7. The titles of permanent technical employees of the post office administration were divided into 20 salaried groups or categories. Linemen were in the third category; mounters (installers) in the fifth; telephone and telegraph supervisors in the sixth and seventh; mechanics in the eighth and ninth; chief mechanic in the 10th. The administration organized courses of three months for mounters and linemen and also maintained post, telephone and telegraph courses of one year for candidates to higher positions. A supervisor had to complete this one year course.
8. I do not know what changes the Soviets have made in personnel but as an example [redacted] (first Soviet occupation) switchmen were called engineers. The Soviets were very cautious about security matters. Soviet soldiers were placed on guard posts in various parts of the central office building and yard in Kaunas. The guard-room was located in a side office room of the frame room on the first floor. Identification cards of everyone entering were checked. The loyalty of all employees was checked and rechecked by the Special Division of Post Administration, actually an NKVD division. All employees had to make out numerous questionnaires. Denunciation of fellow employees was encouraged.
9. The telegraph office was located on the third floor of the Kaunas central office. Before the Soviet occupation [redacted] it employed 65 to 70 employees. During the occupation the number was increased to over 100. The office was overloaded with work, primarily because it was mostly used by officials for their communications. Where the one line with Hughes apparatus had been used, this plus three channels of the Bodeaux Kaunas - Moscow line were overloaded. Hughes telegraph apparatus was used for connections with Berlin, Moscow, Koenigsberg, Riga, Liepaja, Siauliai, Vilnius, Klaipeda and Panevezys. On the remaining 20 or more telegraph circuits, Morse equipment and several teletypes were used. There were additional telegraph lines between certain post offices without direct connections with Kaunas. [redacted] all telegrams were strictly censored by the NKVD.

- end -

- ENCLOSURE (A): Sketch Showing General Layout of Building Housing Central Offices of the Telephone and Telegraph Administration in Kaunas
- (B): Sketch of Basement Plan of Building
- (C): Sketch of First Floor Plan
- (D): Sketch of Second Floor Plan
- (E): Sketch of Third Floor Plan

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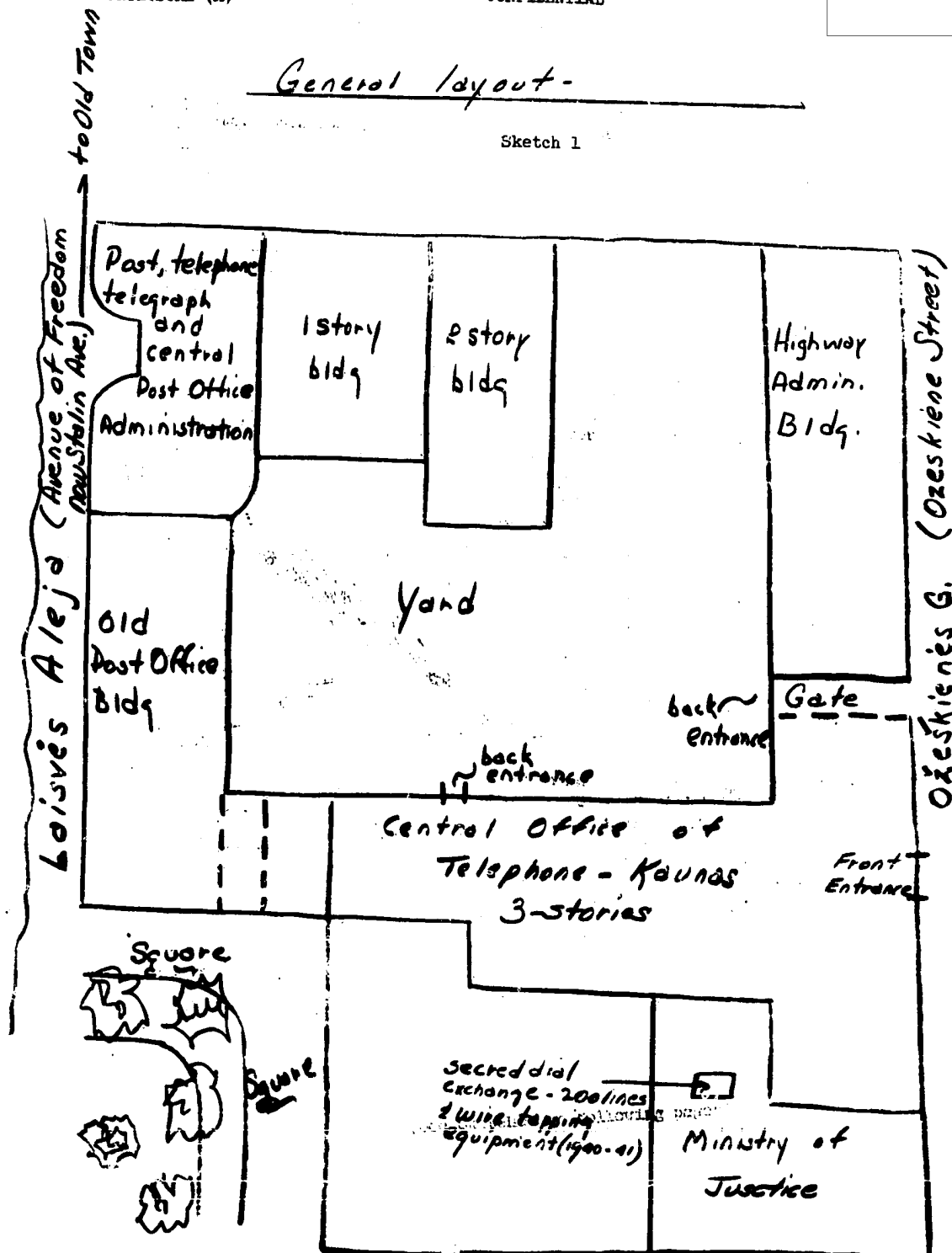
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ENCLOSURE (A)

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General layout -

Sketch 1



Vasario 16 D. GATVĖ
(Street of February 16th)

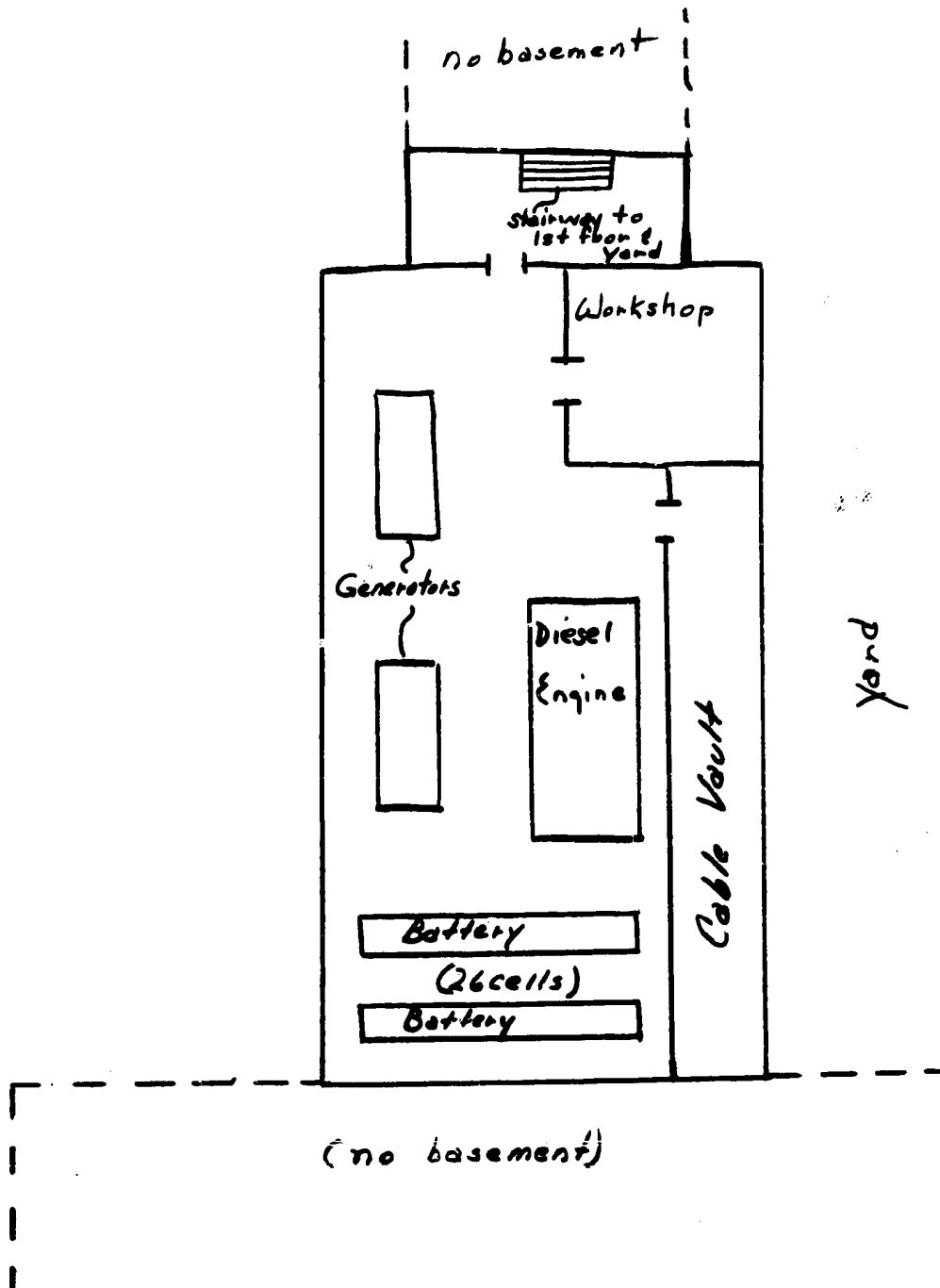
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ENCLOSURE (B)

-Basement Plan -

Sketch 2



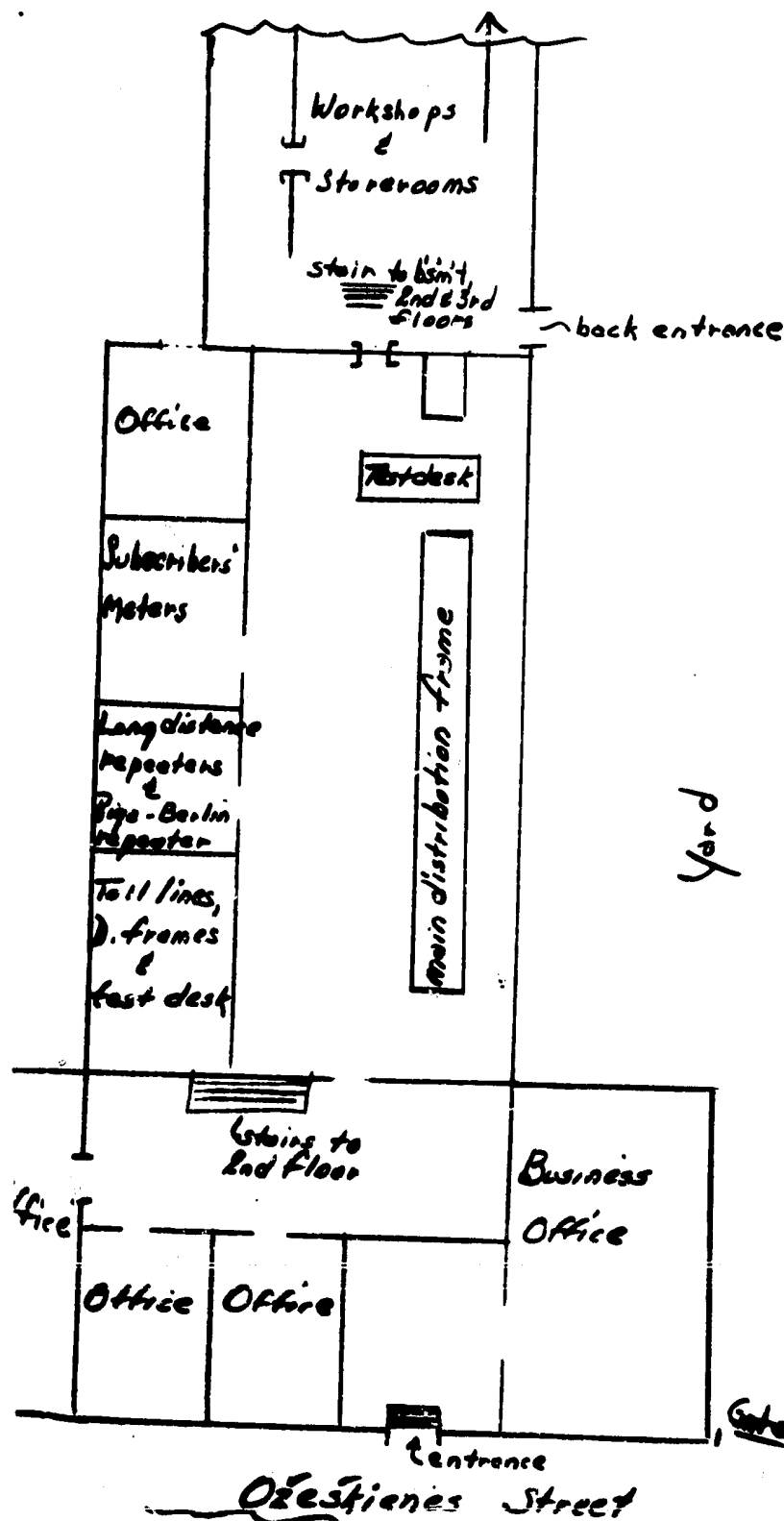
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first floor plan

Sketch 3



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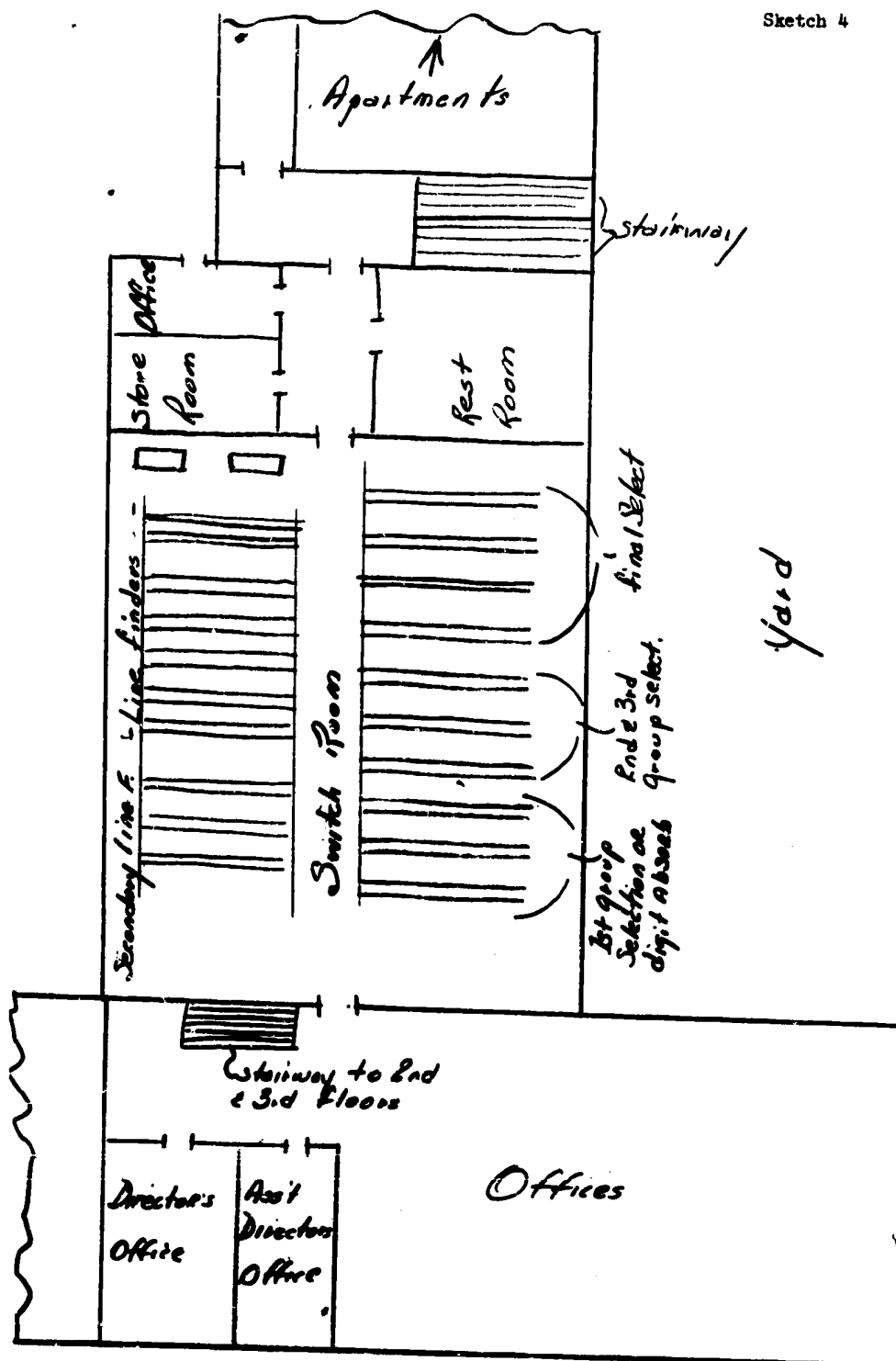
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Second floor plan —

Sketch 4



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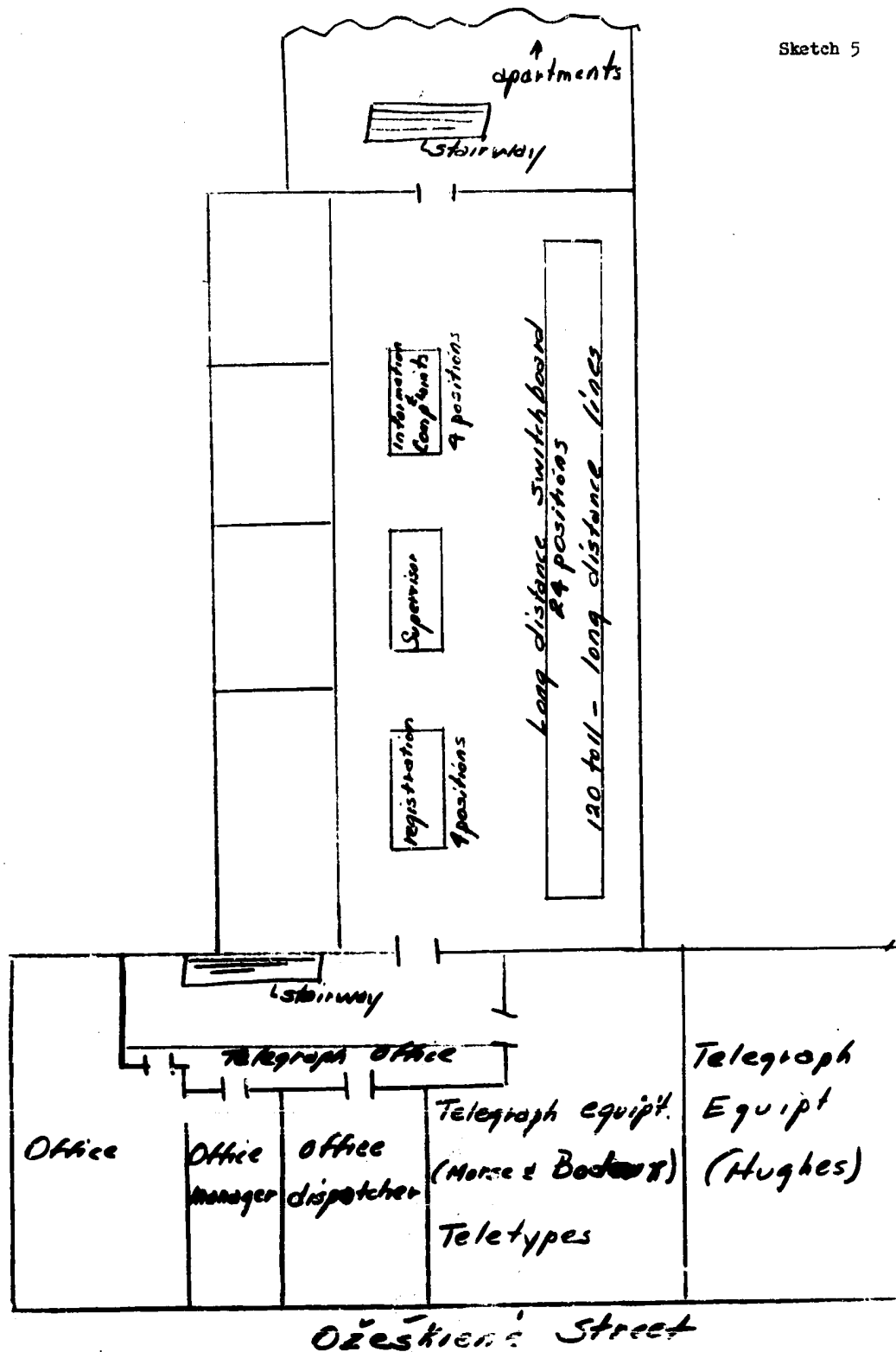
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ENCLOSURE (E)

third floor plan

Sketch 5



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